



Transparency in Ethnography

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With the recent reporting of the reproducibility crisis in psychology and other social sciences, debates and concerns about transparency in quantitative and experimental research has once again taken center stage in academia. Yet how does the move toward open science, and its emphasis on reproducibility and replicability, translate to ethnographic and other forms of qualitative research? In this talk, I discuss the central differences in transparency in quantitative and qualitative research, where the former emphasizes transparency in data analysis and the spotlight on the latter focuses on transparency in data collection. I'll also discuss how transparency in ethnography goes beyond a default in naming the exact people we study and the exact neighborhood of our research by showing how these decisions are not dichotomous. Some researchers name regions or cities instead of neighborhoods, and/or name public officials, but not their primary participants, while others mask identities of both place and people. These decisions aren't made haphazardly, carelessly, or only as a matter of convention. Instead, qualitative researchers have a long history of basing these, and other, considerations on their goals for the project and on a series of ethical concerns about how to maintain the relative anonymity of the people we study to protect what they tell us, their families, their reputations and any possible unintended consequences. As such, we should think of these decisions around transparency as different tools in our methodological toolkits that we draw on depending on the goals and purpose of each particular research project.



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